

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 23, 25, 27-29, 31, 33-38 and 40-44 are now pending in this application. Claims 23, 28, 31 and 38 are independent.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Claims

Claims 23, 25, 27-29 and 44 stand objected to because of an antecedent basis matter. The claims have been amended to address the Examiner's notation of inconsistent terminology usage. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C § 103(a)

Claims 23, 25, 27-29, 31, 33-38 and 40-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Fujinami. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In paragraph 4 of the last Office Action, the Examiner noted that the pending independent claims 23, 28, 31 and 38 shared some common limitations with the previously allowed claims in the parent application, serial

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number 08/735,572. However, the Examiner asserted that the pending claims lacked substantial limitations, hence rendering the pending claims broader. Therefore, the Examiner rejected the claims under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Fujinami.

While not conceding to the Examiner's application of the prior art to the pending claims, Applicants have amended independent claims 23, 28, 31 and 38 to expedite the examination and allowance of the pending application. Specifically, independent claims 23, 28, 31 and 38 now recite substantial portions of the limitations found in the allowable claims of the parent application, serial number 08/735,572. The pending claims should now be considered allowable for the same or similar reasons as advanced during the prosecution of the parent application.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Applicant(s) respectfully petitions under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and 1.17 for a two month extension of time in which to respond to the

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Examiner's Office Action. The Extension of Time Fee in the amount of \$420.00 is attached hereto.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Mr. Scott L. Lowe (Reg. No. 41,458) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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